

Alaska Trauma Registry Calendar

March 2001

State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health

Sports Injuries and the Trauma Registry

Studying sports injuries using a typical hospital discharge data system is close to impossible without pulling records and reading files. External cause of injury codes (E-Codes) are just not specific enough to verify that an injury results from a sport, much less which sport. Because the Alaska Trauma Registry registrars do the extra step of recording a narrative on each injury admission, it is possible to do a comprehensive review of sports injuries, including the specific activity which caused the injury, body region injured, injury severity, length of hospital stay, hospital charges, and outcomes.

In preparation for a presentation at the CDC Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Grantees meeting this month, 69 head injuries, occurring in a sports activity from 1994 through 1998, were analyzed. Head injuries most commonly occurred in baseball/softball (15), basketball (7), skiing (7), snowboarding (6), football (5), hockey (4), ice skating (4), rollerblading (4), and skateboarding (4). *Of the non-motorized sports, helmets are recommended*

for rollerblading, baseball, softball, football, rugby, hockey, skateboarding, wrestling, boxing, lacrosse, and skiing. Helmets are also recommended for bicycle and horseback riding, neither of which were included in this study.

Excluding baseball and softball, which require a helmet only when batting or running bases, there were 36 sports related head injuries where a helmet would have been appropriate protective gear. In 14 of those 36 cases, helmet use was recorded. However, in 22 cases (61%) the safety equipment field was listed as "not applicable." *Please look for and record helmet use in connection with the sports injuries listed above, if at all possible, or mark it unknown.* Most likely in many of these cases the information is just not available but, over time, it is the goal of the injury prevention program to convince nurses, physicians, and other health care providers to consider helmets to be as standard and recordable as seatbelts.

With more widespread helmet use in these sports, we believe that many of these serious head injuries can be prevented or mitigated.

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<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
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4	5	6	7	8 TBI grantee	9 Meeting	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Seward's Day	29	28	29	30	31